

Stunting Prevention as a Manifestation of Maqāṣid al-Syari‘ah: Examining State Obligations in Protecting Human Life and Future Generations

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ABSTRACT

Stunting is one of the major health and development issues that affects the quality of human resources and the sustainability of future generations. This problem is not only related to medical aspects but also involves the state's responsibility to fulfill basic human rights, particularly children's rights to grow and develop optimally. This study aims to analyze the role of the state in addressing stunting from the perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, particularly in relation to the obligation to protect future generations (ḥifẓ al-nasl). This research employs a normative legal research method using a conceptual approach and a statutory approach through an examination of regulations, government policies, and literature on Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah. The findings indicate that state efforts in addressing stunting represent the implementation of the obligation to preserve human welfare (maṣlaḥah). Nutrition intervention programs, improved healthcare services, family education, and social protection policies reflect the application of the principles of ḥifẓ al-nafs and ḥifẓ al-nasl. Therefore, the state has a moral and constitutional responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of future generations' rights through policies oriented toward public welfare.

Keywords: Stunting; Prevention; Maqāṣid al-Syari‘ah; Future; Generations;

INTRODUCTION

Stunting is one of the major human development challenges that has received significant attention in many countries, including Indonesia. (E. Mostafa, et al, 2023). This condition does not merely indicate impaired physical growth caused by chronic nutritional deficiencies but also has broader implications for cognitive development, productivity, and the quality of human resources in the future. Children affected by stunting are more likely to experience learning difficulties, increased vulnerability to non-communicable diseases, and limitations in achieving their economic potential during adulthood. Therefore, stunting prevention and intervention should not be viewed solely as a public health issue but also as a multidimensional concern related to the fulfillment of basic human rights, social development, and the state's responsibility to ensure public welfare. (D.T. Sari, 2023)

From the perspective of law and public policy, the state has an obligation to guarantee the fulfillment of citizens' rights to health, food, education, and social protection. This obligation is consistent with the concept of a welfare state, which positions the government as the primary actor in creating decent living conditions for its citizens. Various policies have been implemented through specific and sensitive interventions, including improving access to maternal and child health services, enhancing nutritional quality, empowering families, providing adequate sanitation facilities, and strengthening social protection programs. However, the success of stunting reduction efforts depends not only on the availability of programs but also on how the state understands and carries out its responsibility comprehensively toward the sustainability of future generations. (T. Vaivada, N. Akseer and Z.A. Bhutta, 2022).

Studies on the role of the state in addressing stunting have been conducted by numerous previous researchers. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of government policies in reducing stunting prevalence through public health approaches. (S. Syarfaini, E.S. Ridwan S. Aeni, 2021). Research on stunting reduction strategies indicates that cross-sectoral coordination, local government involvement, and community participation are important factors influencing the success of intervention programs. Other studies have explored legal aspects of fulfilling children's rights to health and nutrition, emphasizing that the state has a constitutional obligation to protect children as a vulnerable group. (D.M.D. Herawati and D.K. Sunjaya, 2022).

Furthermore, several studies have examined health and human development issues through an Islamic perspective, particularly by applying the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* approach. The concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* emphasizes the fundamental objectives of Islamic law in achieving human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) through the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). In the context of stunting, the principles of *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* are highly relevant because they concern the obligation to preserve human health, safety, and the continuity of future generations. Although previous studies have linked *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* with public health issues, most of them have focused on general aspects of life protection or Islamic health ethics without providing an in-depth analysis of the

state's obligation to address stunting as a form of future generation protection. (A. Fauzi and N. Nurhayati, 2023).

This study differs from previous research by integrating the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* with the concept of state responsibility in protecting future generations. Previous studies have generally examined stunting from the perspectives of public health, government policy effectiveness, or the normative fulfillment of children's rights. Meanwhile, this study seeks to provide a deeper analysis by emphasizing that stunting prevention is part of the state's obligation to preserve human welfare in a sustainable manner. The *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* framework is employed as an analytical perspective to demonstrate that government policies in nutrition and healthcare are not merely administrative programs but also represent moral and legal responsibilities in safeguarding human continuity through the protection of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) and the improvement of quality of life. (M. Dahlan, M.R. Bustami and S. Makmur, 2021). Based on this background, this study formulates several main research questions. First, how does the state implement its role and responsibility in addressing stunting based on national legal frameworks and development policies? Second, how does the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* view the state's obligation to protect future generations through stunting prevention and intervention efforts? Third, how are the principles of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (M.M. Bin Roslan, 2024). relevant in strengthening the argument that stunting reduction constitutes part of the state's responsibility toward society?

This study is based on the hypothesis that the state's role in addressing stunting is consistent with the fundamental principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, particularly the preservation of life and lineage. The stronger the state's commitment to providing healthcare policies, nutritional fulfillment, and social protection, the greater its contribution to achieving the welfare of future generations. Therefore, stunting reduction policies can be understood as an implementation of Islamic legal values aimed at preserving human existence and promoting sustainable well-being.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of the state in addressing stunting from the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and to explain the relationship between state obligations and the protection of future generations. This research is expected to contribute academically to the development of Islamic legal studies, particularly regarding the application of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in contemporary issues. Furthermore, it provides a normative perspective for strengthening state policies in creating healthier, more qualified, and sustainable future generations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a normative legal research method with a qualitative approach M. (Nuridin and M. Huda, 2022) to examine the role of the state in addressing stunting from the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. This methodological approach was selected because the

research primarily focuses on analyzing legal norms, public policy frameworks, and Islamic legal principles related to the state's responsibility to safeguard the well-being of future generations. Data were collected through a library research approach by systematically reviewing relevant legal documents, scholarly literature, and academic publications. Primary data sources include statutory regulations concerning the right to health, child protection, national policies on stunting prevention and reduction, as well as official government documents related to nutrition and public health intervention programs. Secondary data were obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, previous research findings, and scholarly works discussing *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, particularly the principles of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (preservation of life) and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of lineage). (I.M.P. Diantha and I.A.P. Widiati, 2022).

The collected data were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method through several stages, including data identification, classification, interpretation, and synthesis of relevant legal and conceptual materials. (H. Morgan, 2022). The conceptual approach was employed to explore the relationship between *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* principles and the state's obligation to fulfill citizens' fundamental rights. Meanwhile, the statutory approach was applied to evaluate the consistency between government policies on stunting prevention and the principle of protecting future generations. This study does not involve large-scale numerical datasets stored in publicly accessible databases; therefore, no database information or access codes are required to be reported. The findings are presented systematically to provide a comprehensive understanding of the state's role as a guardian of public welfare and human development within the framework of Islamic legal principles. (M.T. Islam and M.N. Islam, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. *State Policy in Addressing Stunting as the Fulfillment of Basic Human Rights*

Stunting is one of the development challenges that is not only related to health issues but also concerns the fulfillment of basic human rights, particularly children's rights to obtain a healthy life, adequate nutrition, and optimal growth and development opportunities. Within the context of a constitutional and welfare state, the government holds the responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of these rights through well-directed and sustainable public policies. Therefore, stunting prevention and intervention constitute part of the state's obligation to provide protection for society, particularly vulnerable groups such as mothers and children. (T. Beal, A. Tumilowicz, A. Sutrisna, D. Izwardy and L.M. Neufeld, 2021).

The right to health is recognized as one of the fundamental rights inherent in every individual. The fulfillment of this right does not merely involve the provision of healthcare facilities but also includes preventive efforts aimed at reducing factors that may hinder human development and quality of life. In this regard, stunting represents a critical issue requiring state attention because its impacts extend beyond immediate health conditions and may affect physical

growth, cognitive development, productivity, and the quality of human resources in the future. Children affected by stunting may experience long-term developmental constraints; therefore, preventing stunting becomes an essential component of national development strategies. (M. Hossain, N. Choudhury, B. Adib and T. Ahmed, 2022).

As part of its responsibility, the state implements various policies and intervention programs aimed at reducing stunting prevalence. These policies adopt a multisectoral approach involving health, education, social welfare, food security, and environmental sectors. (K.G. Dewey and K. Begum, 2021). Interventions are conducted from the prenatal period through improving maternal health, ensuring nutritional fulfillment, providing health monitoring services, and continuing after birth through child growth assessment, nutritional supplementation, immunization, and improved access to basic healthcare services. In addition, the government addresses indirect determinants of stunting, including limited access to clean water, inadequate sanitation, and insufficient public awareness regarding childcare practices and child nutrition.

The state's role in addressing stunting also demonstrates that human development should not be measured solely through economic indicators but also through the state's capacity to ensure the quality of life of its citizens. Investment in stunting prevention represents a long-term investment because the health and developmental quality of children today will determine the quality of human resources in the future. Therefore, stunting prevention policies are closely connected with national development objectives, namely creating a healthy, productive, and competitive society. (R.E. Black, C.G. Victora, S.P. Walker, Z.A. Bhutta, P. Christian, M. de Onis, M. Ezzati, S. Grantham-McGregor, J. Katz, R. Martorell and R. Uauy, 2021).

However, the success of these policies depends not only on the existence of government regulations and programs but also on the effectiveness of their implementation at the community level. Inter-agency coordination, availability of resources, involvement of local governments, and community participation are essential factors in ensuring that stunting prevention programs are implemented effectively. The state acts as a regulator, facilitator, and guarantor, while society plays an important role as an active participant in implementing preventive measures against stunting. Based on this discussion, stunting prevention can be understood as a concrete manifestation of the state's responsibility in fulfilling the basic rights of society. Through comprehensive and sustainable policies, the state not only seeks to address children's health problems but also carries out its protective function toward future generations. These efforts reflect the state's commitment to developing high-quality human resources as a fundamental foundation for sustainable national development.

2. *Stunting Prevention from the Perspective of Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah in the Protection of Life and Progeny*

From the perspective of Islamic law, every policy and action aimed at achieving human welfare can be examined through the concept of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. This concept emphasizes

that the primary objectives of Islamic law are to preserve essential human interests and prevent harm (*mafsadah*). One of the applications of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* in the context of human development is stunting prevention, as this issue is directly related to health, human survival, and the quality of future generations. Stunting is a condition of impaired growth in children caused by chronic nutritional deficiencies, health problems, and inadequate environmental conditions that hinder optimal child development. In the long term, stunting may affect physical growth, cognitive development, productivity, and overall quality of life. Therefore, efforts to prevent and address stunting should not only be viewed as medical interventions but also as a social and moral responsibility to protect human sustainability. (A.W. Dusuki and S. Bouheraoua, 2021).

Based on the concept of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, stunting prevention is closely related to the principle of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life). This principle places the protection of human life and health as one of the fundamental objectives of Islamic law. The fulfillment of basic needs, such as adequate nutrition, healthcare services, and a healthy living environment, represents an essential effort to preserve human existence. In this context, state policies in providing maternal and child health programs, nutritional interventions, and improved access to healthcare services reflect the implementation of the principle of protecting human life. In addition to *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, stunting prevention is also closely associated with the concept of *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of progeny). (R.M. Sani and M. Abdullah, 2021).

In Islamic perspective, the protection of progeny is not merely understood as maintaining the continuity of human generations but also ensuring that future generations possess a good quality of life. Children are considered a trust (*amanah*) whose rights must be protected, including the right to receive adequate nutrition, healthcare, and opportunities for optimal growth and development. Therefore, stunting prevention represents an effort to safeguard the creation of healthy, strong, and qualified future generations.

State policies in addressing stunting also reflect the principles of *jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (promoting public benefits) and *dar'u al-mafāṣid* (preventing harm). The state does not merely respond to existing health problems but also implements preventive measures to minimize the broader negative consequences of stunting. Stunting prevention serves as a form of protection for individuals, families, and communities because the quality of future generations will significantly influence the sustainability of national development. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, the state plays an important role as an institution responsible for realizing public welfare (*maṣlahah*). (N. Al-Khadimi, 2021). The state is obligated to ensure that society has equitable access to basic needs, including healthcare and nutrition.

Therefore, stunting prevention programs should not only be understood as administrative policies but also as manifestations of Islamic values that emphasize human protection and the prevention of harm. (F. Rahman and M. Yusuf, 2022). Based on this discussion, stunting prevention has strong relevance to the primary objectives of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, particularly in relation to the protection of life and progeny. (R. Amin and R. Hassan, 2021). State policies aimed

at fulfilling children's nutritional and health needs represent the implementation of responsibility to preserve human welfare and ensure the quality of future generations. Thus, state efforts to address stunting can be viewed as strategic measures that not only support national development but also align with the fundamental principles of Islamic law in safeguarding the continuity and dignity of human life.

3. *The State's Obligation to Protect Future Generations through Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

The state has a fundamental obligation to ensure the sustainability of future generations' quality of life through public policies oriented toward protection, fulfillment of basic rights, and sustainable development. Future generations are not merely groups requiring protection from various social, economic, and environmental threats, but they also require guarantees for the fulfillment of fundamental needs from the earliest stages of growth and development. In this context, health, nutrition, and child welfare represent strategic dimensions that determine the quality of human resources in the future. Therefore, the state cannot perceive child protection merely as a social responsibility, but rather as a constitutional and moral obligation to establish a healthy, productive, and equitable society. (M. Abdullah and N. Hassan, 2023).

The perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* provides a normative framework that places human protection as one of the primary objectives of Islamic legal values. This concept emphasizes that all policies and social actions should be directed toward achieving public benefit (*jalb al-maṣāliḥ*) and preventing harm (*dar' al-mafāṣid*). One of the essential objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), which is directly related to the state's responsibility to provide adequate healthcare services, ensure nutritional sufficiency, and create an environment that supports children's optimal growth and development. Within this perspective, the protection of human life does not merely refer to maintaining physical existence but also ensuring that individuals can develop their potential and achieve a decent quality of life. (M. Aziz and N. Hasan, 2021).

The state's obligation in the field of child health can be understood as an implementation of the principle of *ḥifẓ al-nafs*. The state is responsible for establishing a healthcare system that is accessible to all members of society, particularly children who are in a vulnerable stage of physical and psychological development. Immunization programs, disease prevention strategies, maternal and child healthcare services, and improved access to healthcare facilities represent essential measures to safeguard the continuity of future generations. Without systematic state intervention, children from disadvantaged families or remote areas may experience inequalities in accessing healthcare services, which can ultimately affect the overall quality of human development. (M.F. Ibrahim and M.S. Othman, 2022).

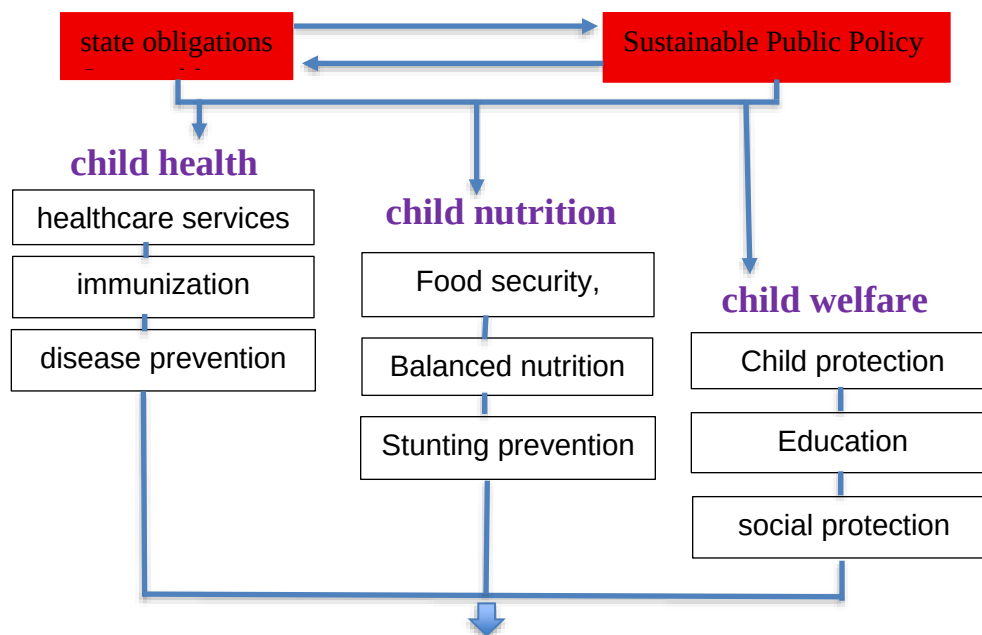
In addition to healthcare, nutritional protection constitutes a crucial aspect of safeguarding future generations. Issues such as malnutrition, stunting, and inadequate dietary quality demonstrate that human development does not depend solely on education but also on the

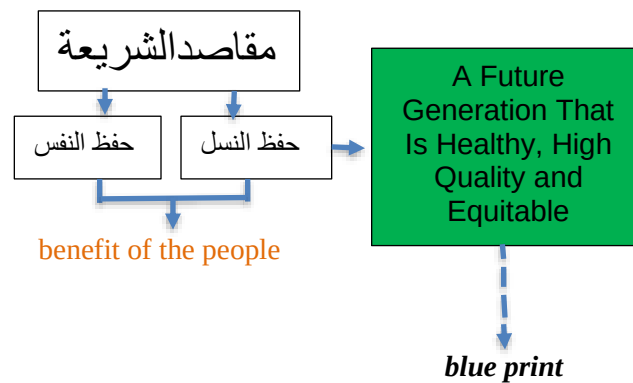
fulfillment of nutritional requirements from an early age. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, ensuring access to adequate and nutritious food represents part of the effort to preserve human life and achieve collective welfare. Consequently, state policies in the areas of food security and nutrition should focus on providing safe, nutritious, and affordable food for all children without discrimination. (M. Riaz and K. Ahmad, 2022).

Furthermore, the protection of future generations is closely associated with the principle of preserving lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). This concept should not be understood merely as the continuation of biological descent, but also as an effort to ensure that future generations possess a good quality of life. The state has an essential role in creating a social environment that supports children's development by protecting them from violence, exploitation, poverty, and various forms of inequality. Child protection policies, quality education, and family empowerment programs serve as important instruments in maintaining the sustainability and quality of future generations. (M. Sulaiman and Z. Zakaria, 2021).

Therefore, the state's obligation to protect future generations through policies on health, nutrition, and child welfare has a strong foundation within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The state functions as an institution responsible for ensuring public welfare through long-term, sustainable, and human-centered policies. Protecting children is not merely a social and economic investment, but also an ethical commitment to safeguarding human dignity. Through the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, sustainable development can be understood as a comprehensive effort to preserve human life, enhance human quality, and ensure the continuity of society across generations.

Figure 1. Generations of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*





CONCLUSION

The prevention and management of stunting demonstrate that the state holds a strategic role in ensuring the fulfillment of children's fundamental rights to achieve optimal growth and development. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, stunting prevention is not merely related to health issues but also represents the state's responsibility to safeguard human life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), protect future generations (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and promote social welfare through policies oriented toward long-term human development. The analysis reveals that the state's role is manifested through the formulation of regulations, the provision of healthcare services, the fulfillment of nutritional needs, the strengthening of public education, and the implementation of cross-sectoral collaboration to address the complex determinants of stunting.

Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, these efforts reflect both preventive and protective functions, as they aim to reduce potential harm caused by impaired child growth that may affect the quality of human resources in the future. The state therefore serves not only as a policy implementer but also as a trustee responsible for establishing conditions that enable every child to obtain a decent standard of living. Consequently, effective stunting prevention requires a sustainable, integrated, and equitable approach to ensure the protection of future generations in accordance with the principles of public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) embedded within *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.

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